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ABSTRACT

Trends in fertility patterns show an increase in births among 30- to 40-year-old college educated career women. To investigate the attitudes, characteristics, role stresses, and satisfactions of married career women who have delayed childbearing until after age 28, and the attitudes of their husbands toward their careers and roles, 35 married career women (mean age, 33) completed four surveys, including the Maternal Attitude and Feminine Interest Questionnaire and the Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, and personal interviews. The husbands completed ten items from the Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, Spousal Survey. An analysis of the results showed that couples had been married an average of 7 years. The majority of husbands and wives were college educated with an average family income of \$50,000; 74% of the women were in educational or managerial careers. Only 11% of the women were taking leave from their careers for full-time mothering. Overall, the women were happily married and reported positive attitudes toward mothering. The transition to parenthood was not highly stress producing, but major changes in time usage and demands for personal energy were cited. Both wives and husbands stated that personal careers and a family were of equal importance. Ninety percent of the wives and 86% of the husbands supported the ideal of equal sharing of housework and childrearing. However, 71% of the wives reported frequent or occasional disagreement over household tasks, since the majority of husbands had not assumed responsibility for the wives traditional household tasks. At the time of the study, husbands participated extensively in their fathering roles through play time activities with the child as well as routine caregiving. Flexible, adjustable work responsibilities and time schedules plus a husband who assumed care of the home and new baby were critical stress reducers for the women. (BL)

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**MOTHERHOOD AFTER 28:
CAREER WOMEN WHO WAITED**

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Abstract:

Thirty-five married career women who had their first child after age 28 reported positive attitudes toward their mothering experiences. The transition to parenthood was not highly stress producing, but major changes in time usage and demands for personal energy were cited. Wives and husbands who were surveyed stated personal careers and a family were of equal importance for both men and women. Ninety percent of the wives and 86% of the husbands supported the ideal of equal sharing of housework and childrearing. However, 71% of the wives reported frequent or occasional disagreement over household tasks. The majority of husbands had not assumed major responsibility for the wives traditional household tasks. At the time of the study, husbands participated extensively in their fathering roles in play time activities with the child as well as routine caregiving.

Flexible, adjustable work responsibilities and time schedules plus a husband who assumed care of the home and new baby were critical stress reducers for the women.

Couples ages ranged from 26-43, the mean age for women at the time of the study was 33, for men 35. The majority had been married over five years, with a joint mean income of \$50,000. All the husbands and a majority of the wives were employed full time. Only four wives were taking time out from paid labor force participation. The women's mean age was 31 at the birth of her first child.

Task and goal oriented, well organized, extensive planners, this group of women were highly motivated and confident that they could be successful as mothers, wives and workers. Family and home responsibilities were ranked as first priority by a majority of the respondents. Overall, the women were happily married and pleased with the rewards from mothering.

MOTHERHOOD AFTER 28:
CAREER WOMEN WHO WAITED

Trends in fertility patterns among college educated career women show a 15.2% increase of births among women 30-44 years old. At the same time birth rates for all other age groups over age 18 have decreased (Time, 1982). "There is a profound baby hunger around these days among women who have put off having children" according to Donald A. Block of New York's Ackerman Institute for Family Therapy. (Newsweek, March 16, 1981, p. 86). First births, among women over 30, increased 37% recently at Chicago's Northwest Memorial Hospital. The mean age of new mothers is now 33 at this institution.

The recent interest in the older first time mother is evidenced by the number of articles in professional journals, books, magazines and commentary on television. Some examples of books written to provide insight into the questions of parenting later than the accepted norm are: Elizabeth Whelan's "A Baby, Maybe?" (1975); Fabe and Winkler's, "Up Against the Clock" (1979); Bing & Coleman's, "Having a Baby After 30" (1980); Kappelman and Ackerman's, "The New Boom: Parents After 30" (1981); and Dariels and Weingarten's, "Sooner or Later: The Timing of Parenting in Adult Lives" (1982). If this phenomenon is big enough for Time, Newsweek and 20/20, then it must be important!

Reasons for delaying parenting are as numerous as the individuals who are now being called "The New Bloomers" (Time, 1982). Both men

and women have expressed the need for developmental lead time, to attend to personal post parental agendas. The desire to satisfy personal, marital and career goals before taking on the demands of parenting are often given as reasons for delayed parenthood. Decisions made during the 20's to remain child free or postpone childbearing are reconsidered as the biological clock ticks away.

Overview of Problem and Related Research

This paper reports on research related to the author's findings in a 1982 study of 35 married career women who had their first child after age 28. The major purposes of this paper are to:

1. Determine the general characteristics and attitudes of married career women who have delayed child bearing until age 28 or later;
2. Identify types of role stress experienced by these career women and the coping strategies used;
3. Analyze degrees of satisfactions regarding marriage, mothering, household roles, and work; and
4. Identify and compare the attitudes of husbands toward women's careers and their expectations of equality in spousal roles.

Integration of Work and Family Roles

There are 42.1 million women in the U.S. labor force. Fifty-six percent of this number are married women (National Commission Working Women, 1980). The most significant change in female employment is the increasing number of women with young children now involved in paid work (Masnick and Bane, 1980).

The U.S. Department of Labor reports that 50% of the children under age 18 had two working parents in 1978 (Harris, 1981). Thirty-seven percent of the married women with children under three years of age and 47% of the women with 3-5 year olds were gainfully employed. It is predicted by 1990 31% of all married couples will have two workers (Masnick and Bane, 1980). Career oriented women may choose to combine career, marriage, and family roles at different times in their lives.

Gail Sheehy (1974) sees the following patterns common among women: (1) singlehood and career; (2) marriage and career; (3) marriage, career and then children; (4) marriage, children, and then a career; or (5) marriage and children.

A woman may choose to be:

- . a caregiver and a nurturer.
- . a nurturer who defers achievement.
- . an achiever who defers nurturing.
- . an integrator who achieves, nurtures, and cares for others at the same time.
- . never married.

This study concerns women who have chosen achievement through career involvement before nurturing. The timing of marriage is not a concern of this study which concentrates on the choice of when to have children and how women integrate parenting into their life styles.

Developmentally, there seems to be no one best time for childbearing, according to Daniels and Weingarten (1982). Medical professionals are being challenged by older women to reassess past recommendations and beliefs. There are physical risks to both the woman and her baby if she is physically immature, or past her reproductive prime. Physical risks are prevalent among infants born to teenage mothers. The risk of a baby being born with Down's Syndrome does increase with the age of the mother. There is reportedly a 1% chance for a Downs baby at age 35 compared to 1 chance in 500 at age 20. However, if the woman has no medical history of chronic disease or poor health, doctors generally feel there should be no pre-natal problems until after age 39. Between ages 30-35 fertility does decrease somewhat according to recent studies (New Baby, 1982).

Physical issues related to childbearing among older women and the process involved in decisions about childbearing will not be discussed here in detail. The author wishes to concentrate on the psychological and

sociological attitudes related to transitions into parental roles.

Sheehy (1974) identifies ages 28-32 as a critical transition period for most women. At this age period the ultimate task to be accomplished seems to be a new level of autonomy and self-esteem. The need for change, new experiences and challenges causes the reassessment of original goals and past accomplishments. For some career women, work may no longer be seen as the life raft it once was. This evaluation process gives recognition to the biological time clock regulating childbearing. A woman who has always planned to marry and have children may feel a new sense of urgency. The idea that it's now or never may force her to reexamine priorities. The urge to merge and make babies may take over past needs for independence and personal achievement. (Sheehy, 1974).

Established routines on the job and at home, and a proven record as a successful worker provide a sense of confidence and security. Women in their 30's have greater success in integrating career and family roles. Psychological readiness, a fondness of children and a stable marriage may assist a couple in deciding to have their first child. (Sheehy, 1974).

Transitions into Parenthood

Research dealing with parenting transitional issues has not supported the earlier LeMasters parenthood as crisis model. The Hobbs and Cole (1976) data collected in 1965 and 1975 found three-fourths (75%) of the couples reporting slight or no difficulty in adjusting to parenthood.

The eight couples in Cowan's study (1978) reported significant amounts of disequilibrium for both of the new parents individually, and disruption in the marital relationship, during the pregnancy and the first six months after the infants birth. Couples reported physical and psychological vulnerability and uncertainty related to sense of self, role behavior, and community patterns. As the couples adjusted to their first child, demands for energy were out of balance with the availability supply of energy.

Dual Career Families

Current emphasis and professional interest in the dual career couple has created a body of literature (Gilbert, 1981; Gray, 1980; Haas, 1980; Rivers, 1979; Skinner, 1980) concerned with egalitarian marital relationships. Scanzoni's (1976) description of the equal partner marriage, characterized by high levels of role interchangability and career commitment by both the husband and the wife, has caused researchers to examine how such a model can be implimented. Ideals of equalitarianism are hard to achieve as couples find themselves stuck between the intellectual commitment of trying to do what they think they should be doing and the emotional response experienced as they are doing something that doesn't feel right. It is frequently difficult to give up ideas of "his" and "her" work (Rivers, 1979). A man often experiences paradoxial ambivalence toward his wife's work and his home obligations. "It's ok for my wife to work -- as long as it doesn't interfere with what she does at home" or "the money my wife earns is great, but her family must come first"

(Lobsenz, 1979) are frequently made statements by dual career husbands.

Haas (1980) found in her study of role sharing couples that each tried to do half of the tasks involved in providing economic support, domestic chores, household maintenance and care for children. The couples felt role sharing was of greatest benefit to the wife, as a way to reduce role overload while she was employed or continued her education. Husbands benefited by being able to take time off from paid work. Reported benefits were increased independence and freedom from obligations for both husband and wife, greater satisfaction with decision-making power, and financial security. Another reported benefit was in the area of parent-child relations. Both parents were involved in the children-rearing process. Commonly stated problems were conflicts over household standards; lack of initiative to do undesirable tasks; and an unwillingness to delegate responsibilities.

Dual career couples who have achieved a satisfactory division of labor in household tasks, are now faced with new and perhaps greater problems when dealing with child care issues. Shifts in role patterns and power may occur after the birth of the first child. (LaRossa and LaRossa, 1981). Stress or conflict may result due to the expectations that the wife's first responsibility is to mothering. Adjustments are needed to resolve the ambivalence in role priorities. It is the wife who traditionally has had major responsibility for child care (Rivers, 1979). Conflict over child care responsibilities often occur over how exclusive one parent wants or

needs to be, versus the need to share child rearing and how those tasks will be shared. Disagreement may result if one parent does all the routine care taking, while the other plays and has fun with child.

Stress in Dual Career Families

Demands for the time and energy resources of those individuals already committed to career success and a satisfying marital relationship become excessive when combined with the additional responsibilities of child rearing. Reports of stress due to (1) work overload, (2) identity, (3) role cycling, (4) social network norms, as well as (5) discrepancies between personal and social norms are categories of stresses identified by Rapoport and Rapoport. Gray's (1980) survey of the literature on problems of married professional women show practical and psychological concerns related to career and family conflicts.

Total support for her career by the woman's husband, was found to be essential in the research Gray reviewed (Gray, 1979). The husband's interest, involvement and commitment to his wife's career, as well as his willingness to share equally in household chores and child care, were found to be critical to the management of role conflict.

Working women frequently reported conflict over marital, maternal, work and household chores. Twenty-eight dual career couples with small children reported conflict between career and child care responsibilities (Johnson and Johnson, 1977). The women experienced emotional depletion,

fatigue, and guilt. Coping strategies used to reduce conflict were to temporarily reduce career ambitions while the children were young, and rank family work as the most important (Poloma and Garland, 1971). In another study all of the 22 married career women with children rated the maternal role slightly higher in rewards than their professional role. The women dealt with stress through a process of role redefinition or role expansion. Greater satisfaction was experienced through the use of role redefinition (Gilbert, 1981).

The majority of couples studied by Poloma and Garland, (1978), felt the benefits of increased income and the wife's greater personal satisfaction outweighed the costs of stress caused by the lack of time and energy.

Project Description

This research was carried out in 1981-82, the period granted the author for sabbatical leave by her university employer. The researcher confined her sample to women who defined themselves as career oriented. Therefore most were highly educated with the majority having college degrees.

Sample Selection

Data were collected from 35 married career women living near three midwestern university communities during the first six months of 1982.

To participate in the study, the women needed to (1) be married, (2) have given birth to her first child after age 28, (3) have a past and/or present employment record, and (4) define herself as career oriented.

Participants were identified through personal professional contacts with individuals in varied settings. Names of women who met the above criteria, whose oldest child was less than five years old, were contacted by phone or letter asking them to become part of the research sample.

Measurement Instruments

The women completed four written surveys which included Miller's (1980) Maternal Attitude and Feminine Interest Questionnaires. The 15 items from the Spanier (1976) Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire rated areas of marital agreement or disagreement. The degree of marital happiness was described on a scale from extremely unhappy to perfect. Gray's (1979) 38 item instrument assessed areas of support for the wife's career plus types of role strain and coping strategies. The women also rated their level of satisfaction with the way they have dealt with role stress, and allocation of household chores.

Methodology

Personal interview data were collected from 33 of the women. This interview of approximately 60 minutes, sought to validate written responses, plus identify personal needs and perceptions regarding work and family life. The topic first discussed related to changes in the woman's life since

the arrival of her baby. Adjustments to mothering, the costs and benefits of parenting for both herself and her husband were covered. The woman's perceptions of equalitarianism in the division of labor were also investigated.

Thirty-three husbands of these thirty-five women were willing to respond to the ten item instrument adapted from Miller's (1980) Spousal Survey. The results gave indication of desired family size and attitudes toward role performance.

The importance of family, marriage, and career roles were studied through the analysis of the data to learn about (1) personal attitudes, (2) stress producing events and coping strategies, (3) role satisfactions, and (4) degrees of equality desired in spousal roles.

Sample Characteristics

Age

The women ranged in age from 28 to 39 at the time of the study, with an average age of 33. Sixty-three percent (22) were between 30 and 33. Husbands ages ranged from 26 to 43, with the majority (24) under age 35. Five men were under 30 while only three of the women were in this age group.

Marital History

Years married for the couples ranged from 2 to 13 years with a sample average of seven years. Eighty-two percent had been married four or more years. Three of the women and one man stated they had been married before. With one exception, all were currently married to the father of their children. The previously married husband had two children from his first marriage.

Education

Ninety-four percent of the women and ninety-six percent of the men held at least one college degree. Two of the wives and only one husband had not completed a four year college degree, however one wife had completed three years of college. Twelve of the husbands and seven of the wives held PhD degrees. At least six of the women were working toward or nearing completion of the terminal degree. Three were considering returning to graduate school.

Employment

Seventy-four percent (26) of the women were involved in educational or managerial career areas, five were in social services, two in sales/ clerical areas, and one was the owner of a private nursery-elementary school. The majority (90%) of the women had been employed six or more years. Only eleven percent (4) of the 35 respondents were taking time out from their careers for full-time motherhood. These four women resigned their positions, choosing to discontinue career involvement, at least when

the child was very young.

Employment histories of the husbands differed from the wives in that fewer were in education, more were in professional service occupational categories. All were in white collar salary jobs. The men had been employed 4 to 15 years. The greatest number had been employed at least eight years.

Income

Incomes ranged from \$10,000 to over \$40,000 for the women. Slightly over half of the women earned over \$20,000 (56%) and less than half (42%) earned under \$20,000. Only four of the wives earned over \$30,000 while 14 of the husbands incomes were in that range. Husbands mean income was \$32,000.

Religion

Fifty-seven percent (20) of the women indicated Protestant as their religion, while 43% (15) of the men made the same choice. There were four Catholics in both the male and female groups, twenty percent (7) of the husbands indicated Jewish affiliation while only eleven percent (4) of the women made this choice. The remaining respondents indicated "other" or no affiliation.

Children

There were 39 children, whose ages ranged from two weeks to five years in the group. Fifty-four percent (19) were infants under 12 months,

22 percent were 13 to 24 month old, with the remaining 25 percent (9) between two to five years.

Four mothers had two children, (one set of twins) and two women were expecting their second child when interviewed. Seventy-one percent stated they desired two children. Eleven percent (4) said they wanted three children while only two desired four children. The majority (71%) of the husbands responded that they desired one or two children. Eighteen percent (5) said they wanted two or three and fourteen percent (4) desired three or four children.

Years married before the first child was born ranged from 2 to 13 years. Sixty-three percent of the couples had been married five or more years before having a baby. The women's ages at the time their first baby was born was between 28 and 37, with a mean age of 31. Fifty-seven percent (20) of the women were 28-31 years old, while 43% (15) were 32-37.

Sixty-six percent (23) of the women returned to work before the baby was six months old at least on a part-time basis and 23% (8) returned while the baby was six to twelve months old.

Findings

Attitudes Toward Family Roles

The 35 women in this study expressed positive attitudes regarding

their mothering experiences. Responses indicated most were pleased they had recognized their need to nurture. In the interviews women whose infants were between the ages of 4 to 12 months were "glowing" with excitement from this new experience. In all cases, the women reported they felt very positive about being a mother.

The greatest degree of satisfaction from mothering was reported to have occurred when the baby's communication skills included smiling, recognition, and vocalizations. Mothers of toddler or pre-school age children appeared to no longer be experiencing the emotional highs observed in mothers of infants. The toddlers needs to explore their environment required greater supervision making additional energy demands on the mother.

Scores on Miller's Maternal Attitude Questionnaire showed little support for his scales when used to analyze the responses. There was only slight acceptance of items on the traditional maternity scales. Respondents showed positive agreement with only two of the six items on the traditional maternity scale. One item out of three showed agreement on the pregnancy and childbirth scale. The role filling maternity and the positive maternity motivation scales were rejected. Of the items which measured traditionalism only four showed any level of desirability: i.e., (1) taking complete care of a little baby; (2) feeling a baby kick and move inside me; (3) breastfeeding and cuddling a baby; (4) sharing the fun and work of child rearing with my husband. The women rejected the following items as not necessary

or desirable: (1) having a child makes me feel like a woman; (2) having a child who will support me in old age; (3) having a child helps me cope with idleness; and (4) having a child to fulfill my marriage. On Miller's modern-traditional scale, consisting of 25 items, support was given on 16 of the items in the direction of the modern orientation.

Other items showed lack of traditional orientation toward mothering as found on Miller's Feminine Interest Questionnaire. Disagreement was found on four out of the seven items used to measure traditional role orientation on the FIQ. Rejected were the items: (1) being a mother is a woman's most important role; (2) keeping her home happy for her husband; (3) the feeling that a child was necessary to feel like a woman; (4) a child is necessary for fulfillment of marriage; (5) a child is needed for support in old age; or (6) to keep busy. The women did not show any acceptance of the husband or home oriented cluster scales as developed by Miller.

Only two of the six items on the FIQ homemaker dissatisfaction scale received general acceptance. A woman's participation in a job, career or the community was viewed as important as being a wife or mother. No support was reported for the career deterrent and family size limitation scales.

With the lack of support for the traditional maternal role, as measured by the Miller scales and the information collected during the personal interviews, the researcher concludes that the women hold an equalitarian orientation. The women did score moderate levels of support for Miller's

modern scale as discussed above. Miller did not label any scales equalitarian; however, there were six items on the FIQ which measured attitudes of spousal equality. Agreement was shown on five of the six items. Over 90% of the wives and 86% of the husbands reported agreement on items related to equal sharing of household work and child rearing. Both groups felt careers and having children were of equal importance to both men and women. Role reversal items received no consistent responses, thus these statements were neither supported nor rejected by either husbands or wives.

Eighty-six percent of the husbands disagreed with the statement "A challenging, career or job is more personally rewarding than having children." The husbands also rejected having a wife who is a full-time homemaker and mother. The husbands (89%) felt a man gets the same amount of satisfaction out of raising children as does a woman.

In general, the women expressed feelings of confidence that they could balance and manage all their responsibilities. Eighty-six percent stated they wanted it all, to be wife, mother, homemaker and career person and were determined to do a good job. The majority felt they were performing roles according to personal standards of excellence. Only three expressed mild dissatisfaction with the way they are handling their roles at the present time.

Stress and Coping Strategies

Strain, resulting from stress was caused by the lack of time. In

personal interviews the women stated problems with time (management or lack of available time) was the greatest area of change since the baby's birth and their return to work. Gray's instrument which measures stress, found 91% reporting strain from the lack of time. Personal needs and interests became low priority items.

A variety of stress reduction strategies were used by the women (Gray's Scale). Eighty-nine percent (31) of the women sought help with tasks from family members. This turned out to be the husband. Eighty-six percent (30) scheduled and organized carefully to maximize output. The women also reported they developed new attitudes, eliminated activities and established rules to reduce conflict. Less than half the women (43%) hired outside help to assist with household tasks, however, 31 employed a child care giver while they were at work. Flexible, adjustable work schedules, husbands who assumed major care of the home and new baby were extremely important stress reducers.

One new mother whose baby cried most of the time during the first three months said she called friends when she felt high levels of stress. Other women planned ahead, never to let anything wait. One packed everything she needed the next day before going to bed. Reliable, dependable care givers reduced stress for these mothers. One woman resigned her position after two babysitters were not satisfactory.

Three of the women in the sample reported experiencing high levels of stress. One case involved strain experienced during the final stages of

writing a PhD dissertation. This woman was employed full-time in an educational administrative position, plus trying to fulfill her roles as a wife and the mother of a 14 month old child. A second case involved an unwanted, unplanned pregnancy. This woman had just accepted a management training position in large corporation before learning she was four months pregnant. The pressure of needing to establish herself as a productive worker, dealing with the shock of being pregnant, with little support from her husband caused high levels of stress. By the time of the interview the baby was 15 months, and some of the stress had subsided, however, marital stress still remained. A third wife experienced high levels of stress due to personal health problems caused by work-related strain.

Career Attitudes

Items on both the Miller's FIQ and Gray's career attitude section showed support for the women's careers in general and their personal careers as well. Eighty-five percent (30) felt a career was as important as parenting and being a wife. However, the number dropped to 74% on the item which stated working is as important as raising a family. Responses were inconsistent on the items: (1) housework only isn't enough to keep a woman happy, and (2) a husband has more respect for a wife if she has a career. Husbands, colleagues, friends and parents were seen as all being supportive of the woman's career (listed in order of greatest support). Husbands and wives careers were viewed as being of equal importance by 86% of the women.

Marital Satisfaction

On Spaniers Marital Satisfaction Scale, 91% (32) rated their marriage as happy, very or extremely happy. High agreement in areas of (1) making major decisions; (2) career decisions; (3) aims, goals, things important; and (4) childrearing. The only area with disagreement was on household tasks with 71% (25) reporting occasional or frequent disagreement. This was supported by comparison to the household task major responsibility check list. Wives reported they had greater responsibility than the husband in food preparation, shopping, child care arrangements, child care, laundry and planning for social activities with the family. Husbands were reported as involved with home maintenance, finances and cleaning.

In general the 35 women in this study felt their personal lives and career achievements were very important to them and that raising children was only a small part of being a woman. The majority of the wives felt a satisfactory task allocation system had been developed. Most felt they held the personal power to negotiate change. Three-fourths of the women rated their families first while nearly one-fourth of the participants felt it was not possible to rank family, career or homemaker roles.

Summary of Research

Participants ages ranged from 26-43. The mean age for women was 33 and for men 35 at the time of the study. Over 63% of the couples had been married five years before their first child was born. The woman's mean age at the time her first child was born was 31. Most had at least

one college degree, with two-thirds of the women and men having graduate degrees. Most of the men had incomes over \$20,000 while only half of the women had corresponding incomes. Mean combined household income was above \$50,000. All the husbands and the majority of the wives were employed full-time. At the time the data were collected the children ranged in age from two weeks to five years. Most of the couples had one child at the time of the interviews, but indicated a desire for two children.

The women expressed overall satisfaction with their current life role choices on both written and verbal data. The women rated on the modern, equalitarian side of the Feminine Interest Scale, rejecting traditional maternal role indicators on the Maternal Attitude Scale. (Miller, 1980). The husbands indicated support for equalitarian career and family roles. Both husbands and wives felt having a career was important to men and women. It was felt men and women should spend equal time in household tasks and childrearing. However, when asked, the wives stated their husband did not always share household chores equally. They felt their husbands were more interest in child care activities. Comments were similar to the General Mills 1980-81 (Harris, 1981) study of work/family issues. This report found 59% of the mothers had major responsibility for child care. In 36% of the households, the responsibility was equally shared. The women in this study perceived husbands as willing to help, but they did not assume major responsibility for many domestic tasks. This may be due to the need for women to hold on to some of those core home and family responsibilities, which may be seen as closely related to a sense of self-

worth. Yogev (1981) reported that women need a traditional division of labor to legitimize outside achievements. This research does not seem to support the above conclusion.

Women in this study compared favorably to Daniels and Weingarten's (1982) postponers. They were well organized, goal oriented, planned extensively and were highly motivated to achieve as mothers, workers and wives. They did not indicate the need for more information about children. This may have been due to the fact that several of the women had some academic preparation in human development. However, in one case, cognitive knowledge and the need to be a perfect mother, in order to maintain credibility with colleagues, created high levels of stress. One woman discovered she couldn't fit her new baby neatly into her life. She felt a loss of control and predictability.

Descriptions of the husbands in this sample supported Daniels and Weingarten's, (1982) "Fatherhood Click" concept. In their study the delays and mid-life fathers who were established in their work were ready to concentrate on family and enjoy the generativity of fathering. Older fathers were able to recognize and act on their needs to nurture. Daniels and Weingarten found two-thirds of the fathers were involved regularly in the daily care of preschoolers. Flexible and stable work roles, shared marital roles established before parenting, appeared to have assisted in the acceptance that both the husband and wife have two major areas of care and responsibility.

The women who were employed when interviewed, assumed they would remain active in their career field when they became pregnant. Strong support for the wife's career was reported from husbands and significant others. Commitment by the husband to his wife's career and shared roles are critical variables. None of the women reported guilt feelings due to leaving their baby with someone else. Some made ambivalence statements feeling they might miss out on some new development of the child when they are away. One woman said if her husband had not been able to share the child care responsibilities she would have taken a leave of absence. She felt very strongly about her baby being cared for by one parent not a babysitter.

Home and family responsibilities were reported as first priorities in the majority of cases. Like Gray's (1980) sample, this group of women were willing to lower their career aspirations if necessary. The women felt very good about shared roles and did not feel loss of self esteem if someone else helped or assumed responsibility for domestic or child care tasks.

Overall the women were happy in their marriages and very pleased with the rewards from mothering.

Need for Further Research

While these findings cannot be generalized to the population as a whole, they can serve as a pilot for further research on this emerging trend. Hard data is needed to facilitate effective education programs to help couples make decisions about the timing of children.

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